Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

Plot to Assassinate Kissinger

A reported plot to assassinate Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger in Costa Rica six months ago was blocked by U.S. and Costa Rican authorities four days before it was to have been carried out.

We have pieced together the story from secret testimony before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and from interviews with Cuban exiles and U.S. intelligence sources.

A Cuban terrorist named Orlando Bosch Avila was reported to be gunning for Kissinger. The attempt on Kissinger's life was expected, according to reports, during his visit to Costa Rica in February.

Shortly before Kissinger's arrival, Bosch slipped into Cost Rica on a false passport. But the FBI and the Secret Service had been alerted. They traced Bosch's movements and notified Costa Rican authorities. Bosch was arrested and put in all four days before Kissinger arrived.

The plot to kill Kissinger apparently grew out of his overtures to improve relations with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro in 1972. This reportedly upset an anti-Castro terrorist band, Cuban Action, which Bosch headed.

We reported part of the story in 1974 after a lengthy investigation in Miami. In columns on Sept. 1 and Nov. 12, 1974, we warned that anti-Castro terrorists planned an "assassination . . . against American ocngressmen and businessmen who supported a . . . thaw." We noted that Kissinger had been in touch with Castro.

The first hint that Kissinger was a target came later from Carlos Rivero Collado, son of the man elected to the presidency of Cuba in 1958. Rivero was active in the anti-Castro underground in Miami's Little Havana. He later redefected to Cuba where he gave a fascinating interview.

"I have known privately since 1972," he said about "the plan to assassinate the U.S. Secretary of State." He said the plot had taken "certain form" by 1973 and had been "actualized" by 1974.

In a reference to our 1974 columns, he added: "This fact, which, I repeat, I've known privately, has been corroborated by the U.S. journalist Jack Anderson."

Rivero named Bosch as one of the 18 anti-Castro leaders who had conspired to kill American and other leaders promoting a Cuban-American detente. Bosch had been convicted in 1968 of shelling a Polish freighter with a bazooka while it was moored in Miami. He jumped federal parole and fled to Venezuela in 1974.

Forida's Dade County Public Safety Department, because of the huge Cuban population in Miami, has excellent ties throughout Latin America. In early 1976, the county's terrorist expert, Lt. Thomas Lynch, picked up some electrifying news.

He tod the Senate subcommittee about it in secret testimony. "We received information from confidential sources," he testified" that there was going to be attempt on the life of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger . . . We passed the information on to the FBI, and they had also received the information, and we notified the Secret Service, as they have the protective duty for the Secretary of State."

The plot was linked to Kissinger's two-day stay in Costa Rica, and Bosch was picked up and questioned. He was held on a false passport charge until Kissinger was safely out of the country.

Bosch later insisted: "My only crime was entering the country with a false passport." Certainly, it was never proged in court that he hoped to knock off Kissinger. He is now at large somewhere in Latin America.

Johnson's Junkets — Democratic presidential nominee Jimmy Carter must have Don Johnson mind when he charges that the Republicans find cushy jobs in the bureaucracy for defeated GOP legislators.

Johnson, a former Iowa congressman, was appointed by President Nixon to head the Veterans Administration. But he was forced out of office when he proved to be a lackluster leader. So he was shuffled over to the Commerce Department, where he has been ensconced as deputy assistant secretary for domestic and international business.

Johnson has used both posts to travel, mostly to Iowa, where he has kept his political fences mended in the hope of running for office again.

A the Commerce Department alone, he has spent at least $7,000 on travel, $5,204 in the last year. He always goes first class, despite the fact that government regulations require coach travel for federal employees. The enterprising Johnson, however has a ready excuse for his luxury accommodations.

"I'm a hell of a big man," he told our reporter Barbara Takei. "I'm 6-foot-5 and weigh 270 pounds." Johnson also said his bad back forced him to fly in the forward compartment. Despite his many excursions to his home state, he denied having any plans for a comeback in politics.